



CALIFORNIA^{2006/07} STORIES



A report on the California Council for the Humanities'
California Stories initiative, 2006-2007



Main photo: Early spring on the Marin County coast. The California Documentary Project Film "Moments in Time" chronicles how a diverse group of people came together to create the Point Reyes National Seashore and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to preserve natural areas like this one.

At right: Aspiring filmmaker Jasmine Tatum was accepted into a film program at the California Institute of the Arts on the strength of a video she created as a participant in the Council's Youth Digital Film-makers program.



This page, top left: The first day in Fresno for a Hmong refugee family. From a California Documentary Project exhibit on Fresno's Hmong.

This page, bottom: "Skipping Rope" is part of "Looking for Hope," a Council-supported exhibit of photographs showcasing kids who live in tough neighborhoods in inner-city Oakland.

Cover, top: Teens in a video production class at Lodi High School made a series of documentary films about issues in their lives as part of the Council's Youth Digital Filmmakers program. The films, incorporated into one video called "Finding Our Own Way: Teens in Lodi," explored such matters as racism among Lodi High teens, teenage drug abuse and cliques on campus.

Cover, bottom right: From the upcoming California Documentary Project film "Filipinos: Forgotten Heroes of the UFW," about the role of Filipinos in the early farmworker movement.

Cover, bottom left: Middle-school student Zach Bishop reads a story he wrote as part of the "Bilingual Literacy Project," a California Story Fund writing project in the Sherman Heights and Logan Heights communities of San Diego.

CALIFORNIA 2006/07 STORIES



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**"IF WE UNDERSTAND
A GOOD DEAL MORE
ABOUT HISTORY,
WE AUTOMATICALLY UNDERSTAND
A GREAT DEAL MORE ABOUT
CONTEMPORARY LIFE."**

—TONI MORRISON

Above: Gloria Merino, a Triqui woman in the Salinas Valley, holds a bundle of herbs she uses to make remedies for various illnesses. From a Council-supported exhibit of photographs and stories of California's indigenous Mexican farmworkers.

IT'S BEEN AN EXCITING TWO YEARS FOR THE CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES. Our programs are bringing forth hundreds of important new voices, opening windows to the past and engaging audiences in conversations about where we've been as a people, what our lives mean, and who and what we are becoming. What we have found is that Californians are eager to participate in conversations like these and to join with others in imagining a better future. It's in provoking these conversations and pushing us to reflect on our shared values and aspirations that our programs play a vital role in increasing understanding among diverse groups and nourishing our democracy.

As I look over the past two years, I am particularly proud of the accomplishments of How I See It, our first-ever program for California's young people. The inaugural program, Youth Digital Filmmakers, involved a diverse group of young people in eight California communities in making films about issues in their lives and communities under the guidance of seasoned filmmakers and humanities scholars from local universities. The youths created films on a range of topics, from young Cambodian women in Long Beach exploring the legacy of genocide to high school students in Siskiyou County investigating what it's like to grow up in a small rural town. According to one young filmmaker, part of a team in the East Bay whose film took viewers on a quest of gay history, "All of us started out completely disconnected from each other and our entire history and culture. The film explores our search for that connection." All the youths' films were screened locally, and three of them were singled out for screening at the 2008 Los Angeles Film Festival, a huge validation of the young filmmakers' efforts.

Another How I See It program is also connecting young people to their communities. Called "How I See It: My Place," the 10-week program — inspired by the ideas of a Harvard professor — is involving more than 300 California teens at 21 California libraries in researching, photographing and analyzing the places where they live. It will be the first time that many have looked so closely at the world around them, and we hope that the experience will make them see their neighborhoods in a new way and encourage them to pursue their newly developed skills and interests as they continue their education.

Our soon-to-be launched groundbreaking We Are California website about the history of California immigration and migration will also connect people to each other. The website will feature the stories of people from the past who have had an impact on the state, as well as the stories of today's Californians, who will be able to easily upload their own accounts of coming to California. The site will contain a standards-based curriculum that teachers can download and use in their classrooms.

We undertook all of these ventures in addition to continuing to support amazing films and radio projects and scores of story-based projects that are adding new chapters to the state's narrative.

Our accomplishments over the past two years would not have been possible without the splendid leadership of former Executive Director Jim Quay; the incredible work of our staff, project directors and scholars; the enthusiasm of the participants in our projects; and the generous support of our board members, funders and people like you. Thank you all, and please join us as we continue the important conversations we have begun.



Ralph Lewin
Executive Director



Top left: Participants in the Youth Digital Filmmakers program spent two days in San Francisco learning the art of storytelling and the craft of filmmaking from spoken-word artist Paul Flores and independent filmmaker Jen Marlow, among other youth development specialists.



Top right: Now deaf, this elderly Hmong American musician still makes and plays his own instruments. From a Council-supported exhibit of photographs of Hmong in Fresno.

Middle: In a Council-supported after-school program in El Cajon, students learned about — and documented — their families' customs and traditions. Here, Afghanistan-born Doruysh Janayar gets a lesson in kite making from his father.



Bottom left: As part of the Council's Youth Digital Filmmakers program, a group of San Francisco youths wrote, directed and produced a film about how development has affected one San Francisco neighborhood.

Bottom right: The California Story Fund exhibit "The Oliver Clubs: Sports and Community in Japanese American Los Angeles" paid tribute to a sports institution for Japanese American youths with a 90-year history. Pictured here is one of the Oliver Club teams in the late 1920s.



Opposite page, top: In May 1942 all the members of the Harada family were forcibly evacuated from their home in Riverside and shipped to an internment camp. The Haradas' story and those of three other Japanese American families in Riverside were the focus of the California Story Fund project "Reading the Walls."

Opposite page, bottom: After 52 years, Cody's Books, a beacon to readers and writers throughout California and the country, shut its doors in June 2008. "Paperback Dreams," a one-hour California Documentary Project film chronicles the story of Cody's and other independent booksellers and the people who love them. Seen here are Pat Cody, who founded the store with her husband, Fred, in 1956, and Andy Ross, who ran Cody's for almost 30 years.



WE MUST KNOW
WHAT WE THINK

AND SPEAK OUT
EVEN AT THE RISK OF UNPOPULARITY.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, A
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT
REPRESENTS THE SUM TOTAL OF

THE COURAGE AND
THE INTEGRITY
OF ITS INDIVIDUALS...

—Eleanor Roosevelt, *Tomorrow Is Now* (1963)



WHAT HAS THE COUNCIL ACCOMPLISHED?

IN 2001 THE COUNCIL LAUNCHED ITS CALIFORNIA STORIES INITIATIVE TO USE THE POWER OF STORIES TO CONNECT CALIFORNIANS, FOSTER UNDERSTANDING AMONG DIVERSE GROUPS AND INSPIRE PEOPLE TO WORK ACROSS DIVIDES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR COMMUNITIES.



Above: José Luis Bonilla spent 20 years trying to build a Mexican village in rural Santa Barbara County. His story is the subject of the California Documentary Project film "Thinking Grande," now available on DVD.

Inset, from left to right: Sierra College intern Chris Kerston interviews Sierra resident Diane Bishop for "Saving the Sierra: Voices of Conservation in Action," a Council-supported project documenting community efforts to conserve the environment, culture and economy of the Sierra Nevada area.

A young Mixtec farmworker sits in a shelter he built in a camp on a hillside outside Delmar. From a Council-supported project about indigenous Mexican farmworkers in California.

"How I See It: My Place," an innovative 10-week program at 21 California libraries, is connecting young people to the places where they live through photography and writing. Here, Jerold Kress, a project consultant for a pilot My Place program at the Bresee Community Center in Central Los Angeles, leads a group of middle-school kids as they explore their neighborhood.

Photo in frame: Krista Kim, age 20, a budding filmmaker in the Council's Youth Digital Filmmakers program in San Francisco.



Since then, California Stories projects, now numbering in the hundreds, have been making a significant impact on California communities by bringing to light — often for the first time — thousands of stories that capture people's imagination and spur engagement in civic life.

HOW I SEE IT, the Council's most recent program within California Stories, is designed to connect California youths to their communities and to give them a variety of skills for their future endeavors. Youth Digital Filmmakers, the signature program of How I See It, engaged teens in eight locations in California in creating films about what matters in their lives and communities. The young people, mentored by humanities scholars and experienced filmmakers, produced amazing films on various topics, from the legacy of genocide in Long Beach to the challenges of growing up LGBT in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Another program of How I See It, called My Place, is engaging teens in 21 libraries across the state in exploring their everyday environments through photography and writing. The program, based on the ideas of a Harvard landscape architecture professor, will feature an online exhibit of the youths' work on the Council's website.



THE CALIFORNIA DOCUMENTARY PROJECT, the Council's media grant program within California Stories conducted in partnership with the Skirball Foundation, supported 25 powerful film, video and radio projects during 2006 and 2007. The films include "Hollywood Chinese," award-winning filmmaker Arthur Dong's chronicle of Chinese Americans in Hollywood, which opened to enthusiastic reviews in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco following screenings at more than two dozen film festivals; "Homegirls," Oscar nominee Isabel Vega's look at a group of East Los Angeles girls once caught up in gang life and now trying to turn their lives around (currently in production, and to be broadcast on cable and public networks); and "Preaching Revolution," award-winning filmmakers Katie Galloway and Po Kutchins' look at the emerging progressive evangelical movement in California (to air on public broadcast stations).

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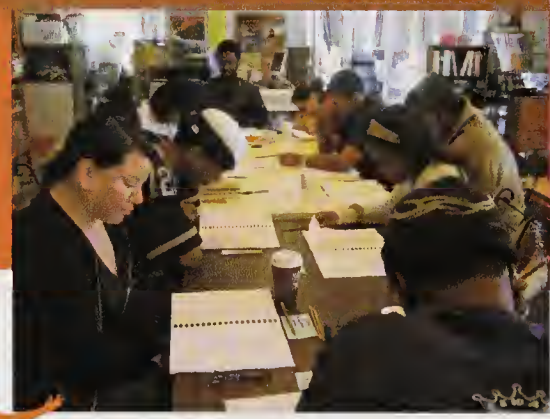


Girl in flowered Hmong tribal costume, Fresno Hmong New Year. From a California Documentary Project photography exhibit on the Hmong of Fresno.



WHAT HAS THE COUNCIL ACCOMPLISHED?

continued





**CALIFORNIA
STORIES**
HOW I SEE IT
THE CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES



Across top: For a pilot Council program on youth culture at five California libraries, a group of Santa Monica teens interviewed graffiti artists and spoken-word performers to find out about the importance of self-expression in their lives — and then created a multimedia presentation about their findings and showed it to a library audience. Here, Adult Librarian and Project Director Erica Tang (far right), poses with 10 of the young people involved in the project.

Opposite page, bottom left: The cast and crew of "A Choice of Weapons," a narrative film written, directed and edited by San Francisco youths as part of the Council's statewide Youth Digital Filmmakers program, conduct a read-through of their script before beginning filming.

Opposite page, inset right: Matt O'Brien began photographing Oakland school kids, like the four girls seen here, while working as a science teacher in an inner-city school. His photographs, accompanied by essays written by the kids themselves, became the California Story Fund exhibit "Looking for Hope."

RADIO PROJECTS include the widely aired "Pastures of Plenty," a multipart series about the lives of California farmworkers; and "Calexico: California Borderlands," which tackles immigration issues through the stories of people who live or work near the California-Mexico border, to air on a nationally syndicated radio program.

Starting in 2008, the Council will offer a media grant under the California Documentary Project to support media projects that use the web to explore issues of significance to Californians.

Through its ongoing California Story Fund program, the Council is unearthing hundreds of little-known stories about California life and history, thereby filling in the gaps and omissions in the state's larger narrative. In the two years covered in this report, 84 projects, representing almost every part of the state, each received an award of up to \$10,000. Many of the projects involved youths; for example, in San Diego immigrant and refugee teens



made a short film about their understanding of the American dream, and in San Francisco teens at a local high school interviewed seniors and others about their war experiences for a radio documentary. Other projects covered a range of topics from the environmental history of the South Central California coast to the stories of Japanese American war resisters during World War II to the role of women in the early history of Filipino immigration to California.

The combined programs of California Stories are increasing awareness of the state's cultural richness and adding new threads to the already brilliant fabric of our state's history.

Inset, from left to right: "Flexing muscles" is from "Looking for Hope," a California Story Fund exhibit celebrating the lives of kids who live in a crime-ridden neighborhood in inner-city Oakland.

Oakland youths participating in the Council's Youth Digital Filmmakers program practice interviewing each other during a Council-sponsored filmmaking workshop at the outset of the project.

As part of the Council's Youth Digital Filmmakers program, teens at Lodi High School, including Saul Diaz, seen here working in the school's computer lab, made short films about issues that affect their lives, including racism among Lodi High teens.

Five Fresno area high school students who participated in the Council's Youth Digital Filmmakers program made a film tracing the lives of three San Joaquin Valley families who came to California to work the land and in the process created new lives for themselves. Seen here are three of the young filmmakers with filmmaker MaryJane Skellerup of the Center for Multicultural Cooperation.



WHO ARE THE COMMUNITY'S HEROES?

BECAUSE ORDINARY PEOPLE CAN SOMETIMES ACCOMPLISH EXTRAORDINARY THINGS, THE COUNCIL HAS SUPPORTED A NUMBER OF PROJECTS THAT FOCUS ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF INDIVIDUALS. HERE ARE THREE COUNCIL-SUPPORTED PROJECTS ABOUT PEOPLE WHO HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Top left: Katherine Siva Saubel, an internationally known scholar of Cahuilla Indian history, literature and culture, was the subject of the California Story Fund project "We Are Still Here."

Top right: The late Bill Sorro, seen here with his wife, Huli, dedicated his life to fighting for economic and social justice for underrepresented people.



FILIPINO ACTIVIST and community leader Bill Sorro dedicated his life to fighting for the rights of oppressed and underrepresented people. He helped bring women and minorities into the building trades, pushed for gay and immigrant rights, and fought for equity for Filipino veterans. Most notable was his fight to save and eventually rebuild the International Hotel, once the center of a thriving Filipino community in downtown San Francisco.

The Council-supported multimedia exhibit about Bill's life and achievements, "A Serving of Love: The Passion of Bill Sorro," opened

shortly before Bill died in August 2007 and attracted more than 3,000 people to the Manilatown Heritage Foundation in downtown San Francisco. And hundreds more have visited the website connected to the project to learn about this giant of the Filipino community. "Sorro touched many people in the Bay Area and beyond," says Project Director Robynn Takayama, "and his commitment and passion serve as an inspiration to all people who want a more just and equitable society. He leaves behind a score of leaders who are modeling their lives after his."

Katherine Siva Saubel, a Cahuilla elder and ethnobotanist whose mother was a Cahuilla medicine woman, has lectured throughout the world on the Cahuilla Indians of Southern California. "We Are Still Here," a Council-supported documentary film, chronicles the life of Saubel and her lifelong crusade to preserve the culture, history and traditions of the Cahuilla.

"Our hope is that the film will send a clear message that ordinary people can take action to improve the places where they live."



The film, originally a stage play by Leigh Podgorski, incorporates interviews with Saubel and her brother, a traditional Cahuilla Bird Singer, and features the creation stories of the Cahuilla. The film, now available on DVD, has brought increased awareness of the Cahuilla and sparked conversations and concerns about the need for protecting and cherishing the natural environment the way the Cahuilla have done for thousands of years.

How is it possible that two enormous parks, the Point Reyes National Seashore and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, dominate the landscape north of the Golden Gate Bridge? The answer lies in the work of a diverse group of people — ranchers, farmers, conservationists, legislators and ordinary folk — who mobilized and fought to make the two parks a reality. "Moments in Time," a Council-supported film currently in production, documents the



efforts of those people. "The film will illustrate how people with vastly different ideas and from different economic and social circumstances were able to come together to find common ground," says the film's director, Nancy Kelly. "Our hope is that the film will send a clear message that ordinary people can take action to improve the places where they live."

Top left: "I knew I wanted to be a revolutionary and change this world — particularly for the poor," said the late Filipino American activist Bill Sorro (seen here at home with his grandson Rico), when interviewed for a California Story Fund exhibit celebrating his achievements.

Top right: As secretary of the interior from 1961 to 1969, Stewart Udall, a former congressman from Arizona, played a key role in securing congressional and presidential support for the bill that created the Point Reyes National Seashore in Marin County. His efforts as well as those of a diverse group of community activists who protected a large swath of the Marin County coast are the focus of "Moments in Time," a California Documentary Project film currently in production.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN COMMUNITIES DISCOVER THEIR FORGOTTEN HISTORIES AND TELL THEM TO THE REST OF US?

CALIFORNIA IS DOTTED WITH CITIES AND TOWNS HOLDING IMPORTANT HISTORIES OF PEOPLE, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE SLIPPED FROM SHARED MEMORY. COUNCIL PROJECTS UNCOVER — AND BRING TO PUBLIC ATTENTION — MANY OF THOSE HISTORIES, SHINING A LIGHT ON FORGOTTEN PEOPLE AND WHAT THEY ACCOMPLISHED. HERE ARE THREE OF THOSE PROJECTS.



Top: The long-overlooked contributions of Mexican Americans to rock music are the topic of the California Documentary Project film "Chicano Rock!" Among those featured is the late Lalo Guerrero, considered the father of Chicano rock, who in the 1940s began to add a Mexican twist to a mingling of swing and boogie-woogie.

Inset, far left: Violet Wong starred in "The Curse of Quon Gwon," the earliest-known Chinese American film. Arthur Dong discovered two reels of the landmark 1916 silent film directed by Oakland filmmaker Marion Wong while researching his documentary "Hollywood Chinese" about the way Chinese Americans have been portrayed in Hollywood feature films.

Inset, second from left: The Premiers, one of the many groups featured in the California Documentary Project film "Chicano Rock!" about Chicanos' contributions to rock music, had a Billboard hit in the mid-1960s, a rarity for Chicano groups at the time.

IN THE EARLY PART OF THE 20TH CENTURY, when there were few opportunities for Japanese American youths in Los Angeles, a remarkable European American woman, Nellie Grace Oliver, began sponsoring — on a volunteer basis — sports clubs for young people in the Los Angeles area now known as Little Tokyo. Those teams, collectively known as the Oliver Clubs, and the woman who founded them were the subject of "The Oliver Clubs: Sports and Community in Japanese American Los Angeles." The project sponsor, Little Tokyo Service Center, gathered photographs, documents and interviews that trace this community's sports organization's 90-year history. The materials were displayed locally in Los Angeles and globally through an online collection.

At the exhibit opening, former Oliver Club members as well as winners of the Oliver Club trophy, awarded to the best Japanese American high school athlete in the Los Angeles area from 1961 until 2001, shared their memories and answered questions. Many audience members learned for the first time about the Oliver Clubs and their importance to the Japanese American

community. They also learned about the level of discrimination that Oliver Club members — and all Japanese Americans — faced. Says Project Director Ron Fong of the Little Tokyo Service Center, "I think that discovery prompted many young people in the audience to reflect on how discrimination and segregation still occur today and how Miss Oliver's example may be relevant to their lives."

In "Hollywood Chinese," award-winning filmmaker Arthur Dong chronicles the little-known history of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Hollywood feature films. The documentary, enthusiastically received by critics, has been seen by thousands of people at neighborhood multiplexes and at film festivals throughout the world, and is now available on DVD.

Featured are such Asian American actors as Nancy Kwan, Joan Chen and B.D. Wong as well as non-Asian actors who portrayed the Chinese in "yellow face" in such pictures as "The Good Earth" and the "Charlie Chan" series. "Things are better today," says Dong, "but there's so much more that needs to be done. Before it was the Tong Wars caricature of Chinese being mysterious or smoking opium or killing each other in gang wars. What's happened today is that new stereotypes — those of Asians as the perfect minority — have taken over the old ones, so that we still have a narrow interpretation of the Chinese American experience."

The California Documentary Project film "Chicano Rock!" directed by Jon Wilkman and narrated by



Edward James Olmos, tells the story of Chicano musicians' part in the development of rock 'n' roll music. Featured are such bands as El Chicano, Tierra and Los Lobos as well as two late legendary musicians: Lalo Guerrero, considered the father of Chicano Rock, and Ritchie Valens.

Wilkman wants "Chicano Rock!" — scheduled to be broadcast on PBS in late 2008 or early 2009 — to open young people's eyes to the contributions of earlier musicians and the role they played in making rock what it is today. "Many of today's musicians are standing on the shoulders of Los Lobos and Santana, who stood on the shoulders of Lalo Guerrero, Ritchie Valens, Cannibal & the Headhunters, and many others. We want kids — Latino, African American, Anglo and Asian — to know that Chicanos contributed to this rock tradition and that they're still at it today."

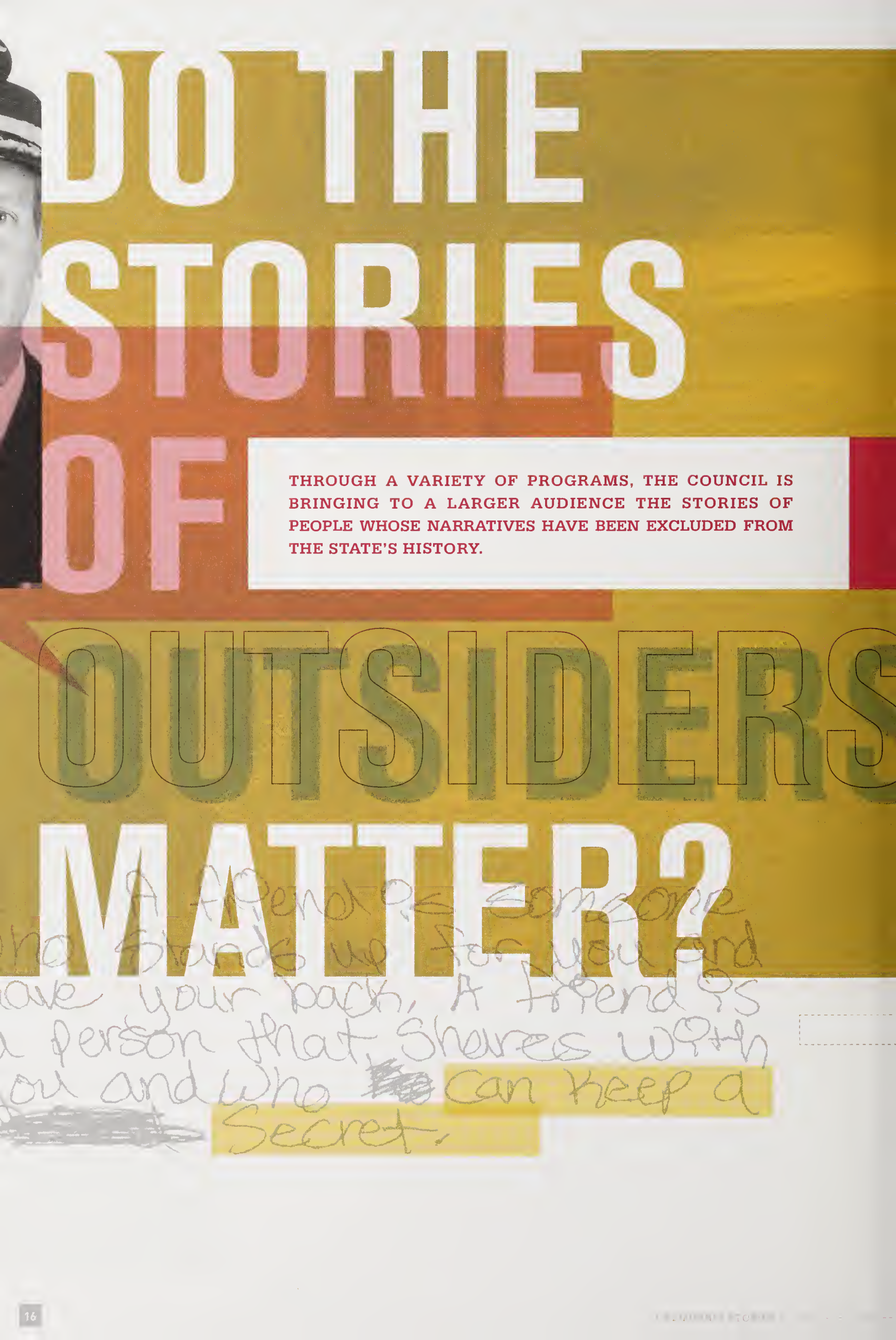
Opposite page, inset, second from right: Filmmaker Arthur Dong poses with actress Luise Rainer, who appeared in his latest film, "Hollywood Chinese," about the portrayal of Chinese Americans in Hollywood feature films. Rainer won an Oscar for her role as a Chinese peasant in the 1937 film "The Good Earth."

Opposite page, inset, far right: From 1917 to the outbreak of World War II, the Oliver Club sports teams in Los Angeles produced a number of outstanding athletes in football, baseball and basketball. With the help of a California Story Fund grant, the Little Tokyo Service Center created an exhibit about the clubs' achievements. On opening day, it drew a big crowd, including former Oliver Club members.

This page, top: As filmmaker Arthur Dong shows in his new film, "Hollywood Chinese," many parts for Chinese characters have been played by European American actors. In a series of movies in the late 1940s, Roland Winters played Charlie Chan, the fictional Chinese American detective.

This page, bottom: Oliver Club members pose in the late 1930s at the Los Angeles Coliseum, where they played many games. A California Story Fund exhibit spotlighted the Oliver Clubs, which were founded by a European American woman in Los Angeles in 1917 and flourished in the Japanese American community in Southern California until the outbreak of World War II, when the U.S. government rounded up Japanese American residents and shipped them to internment camps.





DO THE STORIES OF

THROUGH A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS, THE COUNCIL IS BRINGING TO A LARGER AUDIENCE THE STORIES OF PEOPLE WHOSE NARRATIVES HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE STATE'S HISTORY.

OUTSIDERS

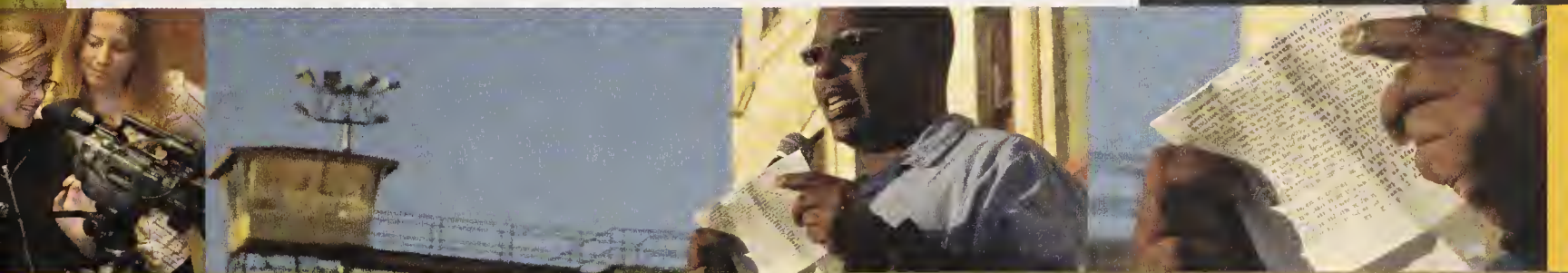
MATTER?

A friend is someone who stands up for you and have your back. A friend is a person that shares with you and who ~~can~~ can keep a secret.



A COUNCIL-SUPPORTED PROJECT at San Quentin State Prison — “Who We Are” — enabled inmates enrolled in a prison college program run by the Prison University Project to write first-person stories about their lives that became part of an exhibit at the San Francisco Public Library seen by more than 6,000 people. The men, all pursuing associate of arts degrees, wrote about their early memories of growing up, about friendships lost and gained, and about their relationships with their children.

“Get in control of your own narrative,” Joe Loya, a former inmate who has become a successful novelist, told the class on a prison visit. According to Project Director Jennifer Scaife, who has taught at San Quentin since 2005, “By enrolling in college, writing deeply personal essays and sharing their lives with others, these men have indeed taken control of their own narratives. And their stories help us recognize the connections we share with human beings everywhere.”



One afternoon at the end of a very good visit, I walked with my daughter, hand in hand, to the spot where we always hug and say our good-byes. When we arrived, to my surprise, she kept tugging my arm. “Take me over there,” she said, pointing to the yellow line that separates two completely different worlds and where other people were also saying good-bye. Considering the line, which easily could have been a hundred light years away, I realized that it was not the distance that mattered to her, but only the fact that we could walk to the end of my world and the beginning of hers.

From “I Love You This Much,” by Felix Lucero, a San Quentin State Prison inmate who participated in “Who We Are,” sponsored by the Prison University Project

“The enforced silence of the U.S. military’s ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy has led to collective amnesia about the patriotic service and courageous sacrifices of gay and lesbian troops,” says Steve Estes, a professor of history at Sonoma State University who organized and helped develop the Council-supported exhibit tracing the history of gays and lesbians in the military — from World War II to the Iraq War. The popular “Out Ranks” exhibit, “the first of its kind in the country, tells the story of more than 50 GLBT veterans through letters, diaries, photographs, medals, uniforms and interviews.

“This exhibit is both timely and way overdue,” Estes says. For those unable to catch the exhibit in person, a version is available on the GLBT Historical Society website. Another version of the exhibit will travel to schools, colleges, community centers and other venues.

Inset, from left to right: As part of a Council-supported after-school project at the San Diego Public Library, “Telling the Streets: True Urban Legends,” homeless youth created a minidocumentary about stories that have become legends in the homeless community. Here two participants in the project learn how to use a video camera.

A San Quentin State Prison inmate, a participant in a Council-supported creative writing program, reads his work during a poetry slam in the prison yard.

Top: Steve Hall graduated from the United States Naval Academy and served in the U.S. Navy for 20 years, most recently as a nuclear submarine captain, but he spent his entire career fearing higher ups would discover he was gay. His story and those of numerous gay veterans are told in the California Story Fund exhibit “Out Ranks: GLBT Military Service from WW II to the Iraq War” at the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco.

CALIFORNIA REFUGEE CAMP 6/07 AT 00 2002

“STUDENTS MADE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN INTOLERANCE AGAINST IMMIGRANTS TODAY AND THE EVENTS DESCRIBED IN OUR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS PROJECT.”

“AT FIRST I WASN'T IMPRESSED, BUT THEN I STARTED READING SOME OF THE INMATES' ESSAYS AND THE HIDDEN BEAUTY OF THESE MEN'S SOULS STARTED SHINING THROUGH. THIS IS THE MOST MOVING EXHIBIT I'VE EVER SEEN IN THE LIBRARY.”

“THE FILM WAS AMAZING IN THAT IT GAVE ME, SOMEONE WHO DID NOT EVEN KNOW THAT THERE WAS A RELIGION CALLED CAODAISM, A WHOLE NEW PERSPECTIVE ABOUT VIETNAM AND ITS RELIGIONS.”



“IF THEY CAN
EXPRESS THEMSELVES,
THEN THEY ARE EMPOWERED
TO QUESTION AND
TO DEMAND OF THEMSELVES
AND OF THE WORLD.
THEY WILL BE BETTER ABLE
TO FIND THEIR PLACE
IN THE GREATER
COMMUNITY.”

“YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE
EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT
SOMETHING LIKE INTERNMENT
HAPPENED TO JAPANESE AMERICAN
PEOPLE LIVING IN RIVERSIDE.”

“THE FILM TOUCHED ON
A UNIVERSAL CONCEPT.
HOME IS NOT ABOUT
THE PHYSICAL HOUSE,
BUT MOSTLY ABOUT
THE FEELINGS AND
RELATIONSHIPS YOU
ASSOCIATE WITH IT.”





HOW CAN STORIES INSPIRE HOPE IN A TIME OF RAPID CHANGE?

IN CALIFORNIA THINGS DON'T STAY THE SAME FOR LONG. CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS, POPULATION PRESSURES, THE DISAPPEARANCE OF FARMLAND AND THE GROWTH OF URBAN AREAS ARE JUST SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FACING THE STATE. MANY OF THE COUNCIL'S PROJECTS USE THE HUMANITIES TO EXPLORE ISSUES LIKE THESE IN IMAGINATIVE AND INNOVATIVE WAYS, BRINGING HOPE TO COMMUNITIES SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO SEEMINGLY INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS.



IN THE SIERRA NEVADA REGION, communities are rapidly trading rural landscapes for urban development. The multimedia project "Saving the Sierra: Voices of Conservation in Action" uses stories to address the issue of growth and to document community efforts to conserve the region's environment, culture and economy. The project — which involves listening booths, public forums, a series of radio stories, a website and an hour-long radio documentary — has given diverse stakeholders, including farmers, ranchers, loggers, environmentalists and others, a chance to hear a variety of opinions and perspectives and, more important, to see how people with diverse ideas in different parts of the region have come together to find solutions to conservation challenges. According to Catherine Stifter, one of the directors of the project, "I think our project illustrates that Californians of all stripes share common ground when it comes to ensuring open space, clean water and thriving agriculture communities for future generations."

Claude Willey, lecturer in urban studies at California State University, Northridge, walked, biked, rode buses and drove through the streets and byways of the Inland Empire to demonstrate the area's transportation problems and to stimulate conversation about the area's future. The story of Willey's journeys plus maps, drawings, photographs and a blog make up the multimedia project and exhibit "Invisible Trajectories: Passing Through the Inland Empire." The project gives people an understanding of the various layers of history in the region now dominated by the automobile — that a train ran on the abandoned railroad tracks only 10 years ago, that a vineyard once occupied the land

where warehouses now sit. Says Willey, "Once people understand the layers, they can begin to realize that people once made decisions about those things and that people can have a role in making decisions about how they want to live now."

In an area of the Sierra Foothills economically devastated by a series of boom and bust cycles, a group of young people — with the help of scholars from the University of California, Davis — are documenting revitalization efforts that bring new hope to the region. The youths are part of "Up From the UnderStory," a project sponsored by UC Davis' Center for the Study of Regional Change and led by educator jesikah maria ross. "What the youths are doing is capturing the stories of a diverse group of rural residents who are creating new paths toward community revitalization," ross says. Among them is a former mill worker who founded a youth organization that provides academic mentoring, vocational training and community stewardship of local natural resources. Another is a lifelong resident of the town of Rail Road Flat who launched a job training initiative to get middle-aged residents like herself into jobs in the burgeoning ecotourism industry. "I think the project will demonstrate the power of stories to engage and empower people in their efforts to make their communities better places to live," ross says.

Main photo: Housing developments like this one in Yucaipa were built to keep pace with population growth in the Inland Empire, the fastest-growing region in the country. The California Story Fund project "Invisible Trajectories: Passing Through the Inland Empire" used stories to examine the region's transportation issues.

Opposite page, top left: As part of the California Story project "Up From the UnderStory," local youths documented efforts to revitalize communities in northeastern Calaveras County. Here, 12-year-old Joey Creekmore of Miwok heritage interviews Pat McGreevy, a member of the Calaveras County Parks and Recreation Commission, about his part in helping to establish the Coast to Crest trail in the area.

Opposite page, top right: Project Directors Catherine Stifter and jesikah maria ross direct the "Saving the Sierra" project, which is using storytelling, radio and the Internet to get people involved in Sierra Nevada conservation issues.

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE'S STORIES TELL US ABOUT TODAY'S CALIFORNIA?

My Two Twins - A poem by Abel Garcia written as part of the Homeboy Stories Project

Killing, drug dealing, store stealing,
That had no feeling,
The blood spilling is thrilling,
Revealing blood from the floor to the ceiling.
Every day there has to be killing.

I got two people inside me
One wants to kill, the other wants to chill.
So I got to stop the situation and feel
My two twins don't want to sin.
But between there's a good-and-evil line within.

My head spinning, the tone ringing
Gotta stay focused and stop the sinning
Cuz killers are never winning
They keep on sinking
Cuz their mind ain't thinking.
Wars, blood on the swords, always gore
You kill, you ain't going with the Lord.
So the killing should stop
From rich to poor.

OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE COUNCIL
HAS PROVIDED A DIVERSE RANGE OF
HUMANITIES PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG CALIFORNIANS
IN ALMOST EVERY PART
OF THE STATE.



THESE PROGRAMS, many of them part of the Council's How I See It youth initiative, are enabling young people to create films, photographs, poems and essays relating to issues in their lives and communities, and to present their work at public events and also on the Internet.

One of the programs that exemplifies what these programs can accomplish is a three-month creative writing and oral history project, the "Homeboys Stories Project," involving 25 former gang members and those at risk for involvement in gang life. The goal was to give the participants, all from East Los Angeles, the skills and support to tell their stories and to develop an anthology.

The project, sponsored by Homeboy Industries, a nonprofit that assists at-risk and former gang-involved youths with job training and other services, and PEN Center USA, a membership organization of professional writers, has had a significant impact on participants and the community. "The project encountered many obstacles, including participants missing class because of getting beat up, or arrested, or in one case, shot," says writer Leslie Schwartz, who taught the class, "but once given a taste of creativity, the Homeboys continued to show up. Various forms of abuse, neglect and violence were repeating themes, yet many wrote and talked for the first time about long-buried emotions. And in doing so, they began to see their experiences not just as liabilities, but as worthwhile stories that could touch others."

At a reading of the stories in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights, one of the participants, Joseph Holguin, prefaced his reading with a story about his brother-in-law, nearly beaten to death the previous night. "When I heard what happened, a part of me wanted to get revenge. But instead, I took those feelings — and I wrote a poem."

A public defender who attended one of the events asked about ordering a bunch of copies of the Homeboy Stories Project anthology, which was distributed to all audience members. "I want to give it to every criminal prosecutor and judge I know," she says. "They need to read this stuff, and remind themselves that rehabilitation is possible." According to Schwartz, "We have the statistics about gangs, but we haven't heard the stories about how gangs affect individuals and communities. The 'Homeboys Stories Project' began the process of bringing those stories forward."

Main photo: Former gang members and those at risk for gang life concentrate on getting their stories down on paper as part of "The Homeboys Stories Project," a three-month creative writing and oral history project.

Inset, from left to right: "A rare and frequently inspiring close-up on girls who are at an age that is usually quite impenetrable to adults," said one critic about "Going on 13," a California Documentary Project film about four years in the lives of four San Francisco Bay Area girls. Featured in the film, a hit on the film festival circuit, are (from left) Esmeralda, Ariana, Rosie and Isha.

HOW DO STORIES INCREASE UNDERSTANDING AMONG CALIFORNIA'S DIVERSE GROUPS?

CALIFORNIA STORIES PROJECTS ARE BRINGING TOGETHER THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE OF MANY DIFFERENT CULTURES, AGES AND ECONOMIC LEVELS TO TELL AND LISTEN TO STORIES. THIS COMING TOGETHER IS ENLARGING PEOPLE'S UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CALIFORNIAN AND PROVOKING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT HOW WE CAN MAKE CALIFORNIA A BETTER PLACE.

ONE EXAMPLE of this is the photo-documentary project "Living Under the Trees" about the world of California's indigenous Mexican farmworkers by photojournalist David Bacon. Bacon's exhibit of photographs and oral histories shows the migrants' harsh living and working conditions — many live under plastic tarps or in their cars and earn low wages — but it also reveals the migrants' vibrant culture.

"I want people to know about the migrants' plight, but I also want them to recognize that the migrants are making California a richer place," says Bacon, who also sees the exhibit as a reality check for those involved in the immigration reform debate. "The way the issue is usually talked about is completely divorced from reality," he adds.

Bacon's exhibit has been presented in Los Angeles, Merced and San Francisco, among other places, opening people's eyes to this almost invisible population. Part of the idea behind the display is to give indigenous communities a pretext around which they can organize events, dialogues and discussions, he says. "In one case, community leaders used it as way of saying, look what's happening to fellow community members in rural areas of California — we need to do something to help them."

Despite the challenges that indigenous people face, Bacon is optimistic about the future. "In part because of this exhibit, Californians have a growing awareness of the presence and culture of indigenous people, and many want to understand it better."

Another project that is helping to change people's hearts and minds is "The Hmong of Central California: A Culture in Transition," by photographer Joel Pickford. Since 1975, successive waves of Hmong people from the mountains of Laos have come to the United States as refugees from persecution by the Pathet Lao government, and more than 30,000 have settled in Fresno. Pickford's photographs present a portrait of the Hmong as they attempt to keep their traditional culture alive and adapt to life in a strange, new world 8,000 miles from their birthplace.

Pickford has presented his work at a number of venues, including the Fresno Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Many Americans," he says, "don't know about the U.S.'s secret war in Laos or that when the Americans pulled out of Vietnam, the Pathet Lao sprayed chemical weapons on Hmong villages and vowed to exterminate the people. I want Californians to better understand who the Hmong are, why they are here and what they have to contribute."

Main photo: Dancers from Oaxaca, now living in Fresno, dance at the Guelaguetza, an annual festival of Oaxacan indigenous culture. From a Council-supported exhibit of photographs and stories of California's indigenous Mexican farmworkers.



The Diaz family, Mixtec immigrants from Oaxaca who pick strawberries in Oxnard, live in a single room in a house they share with other migrant families in Oxnard. From a Council-supported exhibit of photographs and stories of California's indigenous Mexican farmworkers.



An Ethiopian priest blesses a parishioner at the Virgin Mary Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church in Los Angeles. From an oral history and photography project revealing the Ethiopian American experience.



Two Hmong women dressed in traditional costumes attend a Hmong New Year's festival in Fresno.



➔ The Council is committed to providing Californians with innovative and engaging humanities programs in the months and years ahead.

IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, we are launching our unprecedented We Are California website about the history of California immigration and migration. The website will provide a historical context for our current immigration debate and feature the immigration/migration stories of individuals and groups who helped shape the state from its earliest days until the present.

Today's Californians will be able to contribute their own immigration stories to the site via an easy-to-use upload tool, thus providing us with a more inclusive portrait of what it means to be Californian. The site will also feature a downloadable standards-based curriculum. In conjunction with the curriculum, the Council and the California History-Social Science Project have teamed up to hold workshops for California K-12 history

WHAT IS IN OUR FUTURE?

teachers, providing participants with model lessons and other materials for use in the classroom.

In addition to the immigration website, the Council will continue to support thought-provoking documentary films through the California Documentary Project and unique and powerful story projects through the California Story Fund.

We will also explore ways to better serve Californians, building on what we've learned so far and seeking out new approaches to meet the needs of the state's diverse population. We believe that humanities programs can help us learn about the past, better understand the world we live in and inspire us to imagine a better future. As we look to the future, our aim is to engage more Californians than ever before in these vital endeavors.

CALIFORNIA
STORIES
HOW I SEE IT

CALIFORNIA
STORIES
HOW I SEE IT

Background photo: As part of the Council's Youth Digital Filmmakers program, Cambodian American teens in Oakland created a film about the apartment complex where they grew up, an important gathering place in their lives and in the Cambodian American community. Shown here are five of the young filmmakers in San Francisco, where they attended a two-day Youth Digital Filmmakers workshop.

WHO WAS INVOLVED IN COUNCIL PROJECTS?

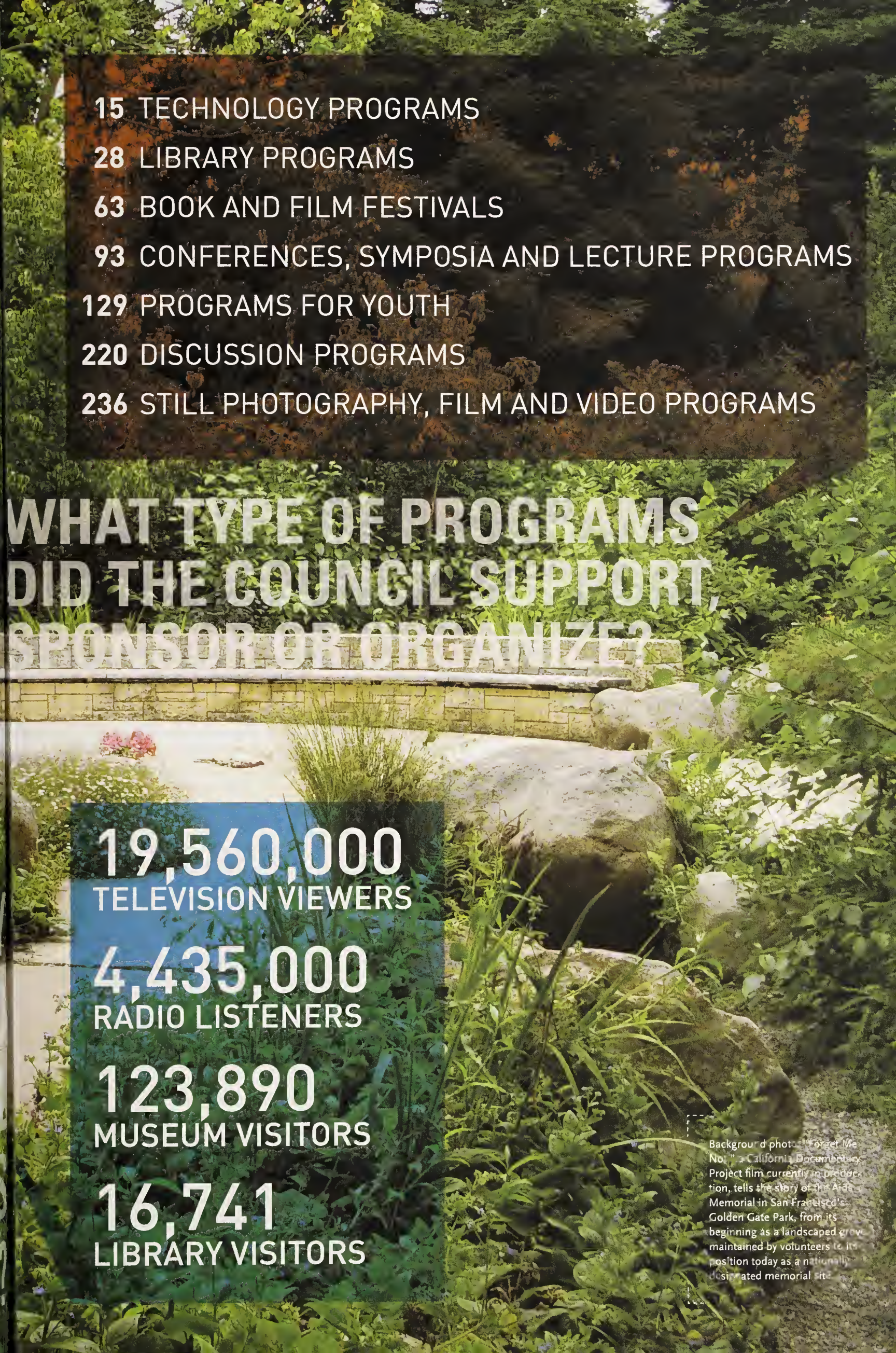
438

HUMANITIES SCHOLARS AND ADVISERS FROM CALIFORNIA'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

77,201

LOCAL HISTORY BUFFS, CULTURAL TOURISTS AND STORY SHARERS

HOW MANY PEOPLE DID COUNCIL PROGRAMS REACH?



15 TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS
28 LIBRARY PROGRAMS
63 BOOK AND FILM FESTIVALS
93 CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIA AND LECTURE PROGRAMS
129 PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH
220 DISCUSSION PROGRAMS
236 STILL PHOTOGRAPHY, FILM AND VIDEO PROGRAMS

WHAT TYPE OF PROGRAMS DID THE COUNCIL SUPPORT, SPONSOR OR ORGANIZE?

19,560,000
TELEVISION VIEWERS

4,435,000
RADIO LISTENERS

123,890
MUSEUM VISITORS

16,741
LIBRARY VISITORS

Background photo: "Forget Me No," a California Documentary Project film currently in production, tells the story of the AIDS Memorial in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, from its beginning as a landscaped grove maintained by volunteers to its position today as a nationally designated memorial site.

DONORS



Above: In the course of his short life, Ritchie Valens left a lasting impact on rock 'n' roll with such classics as "La Bamba," a high-energy reworking of an old Mexican wedding song. "Chicano Rock!" the California Documentary Project film about Chicanos' contribution to rock music, pays tribute to Valens and all the other Chicano musicians who made rock what it is today.

Top right: Hermilo Lopez, a Mixtec immigrant from San Juan Mixtepec, Oaxaca, Mexico, and his youngest son, Juanito. The Lopez family picks bell peppers, raisins and other crops around Fresno. From a California Documentary Project exhibit on indigenous Mexican farmworkers.

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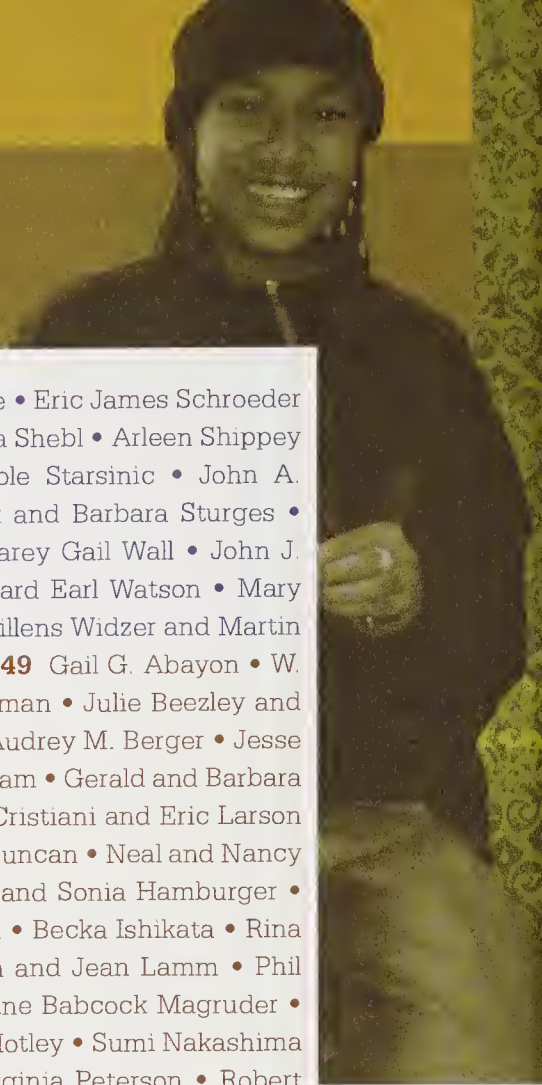
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Above: Nellie Grace Oliver and the eponymous sports clubs she founded for Japanese American youths in the early 20th century were the subject of the California Story Fund project "The Oliver Clubs: Sports and Community in Japanese American Los Angeles."

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The California Council for the Humanities is grateful to the attorneys of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP for their generous gift of legal services on the Council's behalf.

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In locket, left: Early morning workout at San Mateo County's Bay Meadows Racecourse, the subject of "Most Are Losers: The Life and Death of a Racetrack," a California Documentary Project film now in production.

In locket, right: The Chicano group Cannibal & the Headhunters, who went on tour with the Beatles in the mid-1960s, were featured in the California Documentary Project film "Chicano Rock!"

Top right: Aspiring filmmaker Maria San helped create a film about the Cambodian American experience of growing up in East Oakland as part of the Council's Youth Digital Filmmakers project.

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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		FISCAL YEAR 2007	FISCAL YEAR 2006
		Nov. 1, 2006 – Oct. 31, 2007	Nov. 1, 2005 – Oct. 31, 2006
ASSETS			
Current Assets	\$ 1,258,344	\$ 690,498	
Fixed Assets	27,370	27,448	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 1,285,714	\$ 717,946	
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS			
Current Liabilities	466,774	276,980	
Net Assets	818,940	440,966	
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 1,285,714	\$ 717,946	

STATEMENT OF REVENUE, SUPPORT AND EXPENSES		FISCAL YEAR 2007	FISCAL YEAR 2006
		Nov. 1, 2006 – Oct. 31, 2007	Nov. 1, 2005 – Oct. 31, 2006
REVENUE AND SUPPORT			
Government Grants	\$ 2,138,830	\$ 1,749,435	
Contributions	718,874	386,114	
Other Income	14,395	20,993	
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES	\$ 2,872,099	\$ 2,156,542	
PROGRAM EXPENSES			
Program Services	931,908	678,178	
Grants	831,806	662,438	
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$ 1,763,714	\$ 1,340,616	
OTHER EXPENSES			
Management and General	615,720	691,873	
Fundraising	114,691	147,509	
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES	\$ 730,411	\$ 839,382	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 2,494,125	\$ 2,179,998	
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	377,974	[23,456]	
Net Assets Beginning of Year	440,966	464,422	
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$ 818,940	\$ 440,966	

A full audit report issued by Izabal, Bernaciak & Company is available upon request. Please contact the California Council for the Humanities' San Francisco office.

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Above: Justin Lin, an influential young filmmaker, is featured in "Hollywood Chinese," Arthur Dong's California Documentary Project film about the portrayal of Chinese Americans in feature films.

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THE MISSION OF THE CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES IS TO FOSTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PEOPLE AND ENCOURAGE THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY LIFE THROUGH THE PUBLIC USE OF THE HUMANITIES.

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Harada Family Archival Collection

Heather Rowley

jesikah maria ross

San Diego Public Library

Jennifer Scaife

Leslie Schwartz

Sorro Family Archives

Joe Suski

Erica Tang

Carlos Torres

Dawn Valadez

Visual Communications

Claude Willey

YouTHink

DESIGN

Stoller Design Group

River of Dreams by Cheri Gaulke at the Lincoln/Cypress Station, Water Street. From a California Story Fund project documenting the creation of public art on the Gold Line rail line in Los Angeles. Courtesy of Metro
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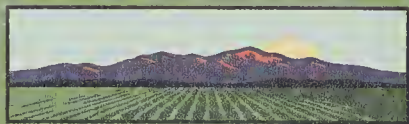
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